

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A yoke assembly adapted for use in a rack and pinion steering gear assembly for a vehicle comprising:

a yoke housing having a bore, said bore defining an inner surface;
a bearing disposed in said bore, said bearing defining an outer surface;
a ring disposed in said bore, said ring including a generally cylindrical body portion having a first extreme end and a second extreme end, an outer surface of said body portion having a first diameter, and an outer surface of said first and second extreme ends defining an inner contact surface and having a second diameter greater than said first diameter, said ring further including an inner contact surface and an outer contact surface, said inner contact surface surfaces of said first and second extreme ends engaging at least a portion of said inner surface of said bore and said outer contact surface engaging at least a portion of said outer surface of said bearing.

2. (Original) The yoke assembly according to Claim 1 and further including a cover attached to said yoke housing, a spring carried by the yoke assembly and a seal disposed between said cover and said yoke housing.

3. (Original) The yoke assembly according to Claim 1 wherein said bore is an as cast bore.

4. (Currently Amended) The yoke assembly according to Claim 1 wherein said outer contact surface of said ring engaging engages said outer surface of said bearing along substantially a portion of an entire length thereof.

5. (Currently Amended) The yoke assembly according to Claim 1 wherein said inner contact surface engaging selected spaced apart portions of said inner surface of said bore and said outer contact surface engaging a substantial portion of said outer surface of said bearing.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Original) The yoke assembly according to Claim 1 wherein said ring is disposed in said bore in a press fit engagement therewith.

8. (Original) The yoke assembly according to Claim 1 wherein said bore includes at least one surface feature for engaging a portion of said ring to thereby retain said ring in a predetermined position within said bore.

9. (Original) The yoke assembly according to Claim 1 wherein said bore includes at least one groove formed therein for receiving a portion of said ring to thereby retain said ring in a predetermined position within said bore.

10. (Currently Amended) A yoke assembly adapted for use in a rack and pinion steering gear assembly for a vehicle comprising:

a yoke housing having an as cast bore, said bore defining an inner surface;
a bearing disposed in said bore, said bearing defining an outer surface;
a ring disposed in said bore, said ring including a generally cylindrical body portion having a first extreme end and a second extreme end, an outer surface of said body portion having a first diameter, and an outer surface of said first and second extreme ends defining an inner contact surface and having a second diameter greater than said first diameter, said ring further including an inner contact surface and an outer contact surface, said inner contact surface surfaces of said first and second extreme ends engaging at least a portion of said inner surface of said bore and said outer contact surface engaging at least a portion of said outer surface of said bearing;

a cover attached to said yoke housing;

a spring carried by the yoke assembly; and

a seal disposed between said cover and said yoke housing.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A rack and pinion steering gear assembly for a vehicle comprising:

a housing having a pinion chamber and a bearing chamber, said bearing chamber having a bore, said bore defining an inner surface;

an axially moveable rack supported in said bearing chamber;

a pinion supported in said pinion chamber and adapted to be in meshing engagement with said rack;

a bearing disposed in said bore for supporting said rack, said bearing defining an outer surface; and

a ring disposed in said bore, said ring including a generally cylindrical body portion having a first extreme end and a second extreme end, an outer surface of said body portion having a first diameter, and an outer surface of said first and second extreme ends defining an inner contact surface and having a second diameter greater than said first diameter, said ring further including an inner contact surface and an outer contact surface, said inner contact surface surfaces of said first and second extreme ends engaging at least a portion of said inner surface of said bore and said outer contact surface engaging at least a portion of said outer surface of said bearing.

13. (Original) The rack and pinion steering gear assembly according to Claim 12 and further including a cover attached to said housing, a spring carried by said bearing, and a seal disposed in said bearing chamber.

14. (Original) The rack and pinion steering gear assembly according to Claim 12 wherein said bore is an as cast bore.

15. (Currently Amended) The rack and pinion steering gear assembly according to Claim 12 wherein said outer contact surface of said ring engaging engages said outer surface of said bearing along substantially a portion of an entire length thereof.

16. (Currently Amended) The rack and pinion steering gear assembly according to Claim 12 wherein said inner contact surface engaging engages selected spaced apart portions of said inner surface of said bore and said outer contact surface engaging engages a substantial portion of said outer surface of said bearing.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Original) The rack and pinion steering gear assembly according to Claim 12 wherein said ring is disposed in said bore in a press fit engagement therewith:

19. (Original) The rack and pinion steering gear assembly according to Claim 12 wherein said bore includes at least one surface feature for engaging a portion of said ring to thereby retain said ring in a predetermined position within said bore.

20. (Original) The rack and pinion steering gear assembly according to Claim 12 wherein said bore includes at least one groove formed therein for receiving a portion of said ring to thereby retain said ring in a predetermined position within said bore.

21. (New) The yoke assembly according to Claim 1 wherein said ring is formed from metal.

22. (New) The yoke assembly according to Claim 10 wherein said ring is formed from metal.

23. (New) The rack and pinion steering gear assembly according to Claim 12 wherein said ring is formed from metal.